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The Newsletter of the National Christian Council in Japan

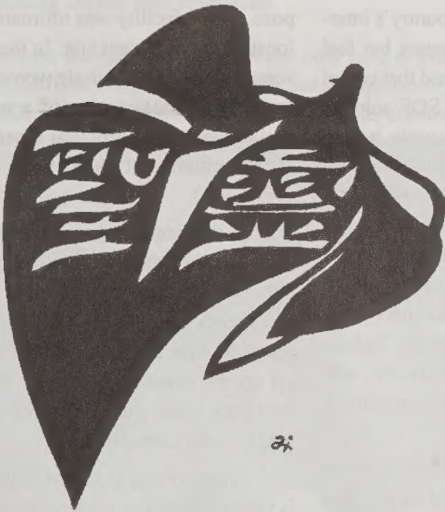
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Longing for Peace in the Midst of Crisis

Editorial

This issue of JCAN covers the ways the Holy Spirit ("Seirei" in Japanese) is moving through justice and peace ministries in Japan. We need this presence of the Holy Spirit in us very much today, not only for our individual lives but also for the lives of our churches and countries. One of the symbols of the Holy Spirit is the dove, which is also a symbol of peace. Our world may be in crisis but the Spirit has not left us. It is this Spirit of God that transforms and empowers each of us as we seek for ways to bring peace with justice to our world. We pray for the wings of the Spirit to move throughout the earth. Come, Holy Spirit! (C.G.V.)

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The Problem Is the Denial of Individual Dignity

What are the issues in the rising crisis with Japan's pacifism? How do Christians in Japan perceive the current crisis, and how can they respond? Ms. Kimiko Ogasawara, chair of the NCCJ Peace and Nuclear Issues Committee, shared her views on these and other questions on May 3, Constitution Memorial Day.

"There is a growing tendency for chauvinism in which human dignity is hurt, destroyed and spoiled for the sake of the state. First, the Fundamental Law of Education is about to be revised for the worse so that the state can control individuals. Second, the words written in the pre-war Imperial Rescript on Education stating, "should emergency arise, offer yourself courageously" (to the Emperor) are about to be made legal again, in which case individuals will not be allowed to express their conscience or to be themselves. This is also seen in the enforcement of the *Hinomaru* flag and *Kimigayo* anthem (against the opposition of school teachers and students). Third, with the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) being dispatched to Iraq, some of its members have committed suicide (about 50 last year, it is said) while many others follow orders from above.

Their dignity and autonomy as individuals are being denied. When we look at the reality, what is actually happening in Iraq includes the maltreatment of prisoners of war, children being killed and damage caused by depleted uranium munitions. And now, the humanity of American soldiers has disintegrated. Despite the fact that the war in Iraq has no legitimacy, they are forced to fight against horror and suspicion, with their own legitimacy denied. What has happened to their self-identity? Their humanity has been denied and yet they are even smiling.

The U.S. military is committing a massacre in Fallujah. Some people say that the SDF will not be able or allowed to come back home until one of its members is killed. Mr. Nozomu Hatano said on a TV program, 'No Japanese has ever shed their blood for the country's international contribution. I cannot but feel ashamed of that.' I am afraid that one of them might die. What if SDF soldiers are killed? They would surely be enshrined eventually at the Yasukuni Shrine as spirits of the heroic war dead. And the government is ready for that. If the Fundamental Law on Education, the National Protection Law (in which the people will be forced to offer their houses to the state), and the emergency legislation laws are revised, the country will rush into a revision of the Constitution for the worse.

Is there still hope? I think there is. We can see such hope in the fact that about 5000 people, including 350 Christians, participated in a rally in Tokyo to mark Constitution Memorial Day, alongside many other rallies across the country.

The scheme for denying the humanity of individuals to such a great extent and detaching them from their dignity resembles the spread of a *furoshiki* wrapping cloth that is then quietly wrapped up.

I believe that Christians are called to stand on the side of the weak even to the point of crucifixion. Christians in Japan supported the country's martial actions during World War II, and that is why many denominations in Japan have confessed their responsibility for the war. Having said that, I don't think that they would easily repeat such a mistake, or link themselves with a national policy that would deprive them of their own dignity as individuals.

When the government tried to relocate a nuclear waste disposal fa-

cility in Rokkasho Village (in Aomori Prefecture in northern Japan), some of the villagers persistently refused to sell their land for this purpose, so the facility was ultimately relocated to a different site. In the same way, resistance by a single woman prevented the construction of a nuclear power plant at a particular location in the community of Oma (in the same prefecture).

In the same way, each one of us needs to confirm the value of our own personal resistance on the issue of the emergency laws. I feel that I would be ready to find a place where I should set up my cross and do fine. We can find hope when such resisters are connected with each other.

However, the situation in the Diet is rather desperate. It seems to me that the reason for this is that Japanese voters have no hope for or expectations of the Diet. In the current situation, however, we can take action through elections, street demonstrations, and reactions to the mass media.

Fifty-seven years have passed since the Constitution came into effect. When we look at the level of Japanese democracy, young people are not so apathetic. If the Constitution was revised we might say to ourselves, 'What a precious thing we have lost,' but I don't think that it would be the end. Even in this case, something new would be born. We shouldn't be too pessimistic.

So, I would like to support the struggle for democracy and try to pressure the mass media to be true and courageous for truth. I hope that everybody can join in this sort of action, as it can be done by anyone. Let us make up our mind to say 'I have a dream' and to hold it fast."

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"Standing at a Crossroad" – Christians in Japan Join a Big Rally in Defense of Peace Constitution in Crisis

In the midst of an urgent situation where Japan's Peace Constitution and laws are being increasingly challenged by nationalistic political forces for its revision into a war-making system, approximately 350 Christians and other individuals joined a big rally of over 6,000 people in Tokyo on the Japan's Constitution day of May 3 to defend its clauses on war-renunciation, democracy and human rights from getting driven into militarism.

Among the speakers at the peace rally held at Hibiya Open Air Music Hall was Ms. Reiko Suzuki, moderator of the NCCJ who spoke on behalf of the religious communi-

ties in Japan. "To love our enemy is to love ordinary people like those in Iraq by making no enemies," she said, while referring to the history of Christian war-makings and current interfaith dialogues. "If we support war actions, we would massacre the next generations and abandon our responsibility toward future generations."

"Standing at a crossroad (Jer 6:16), I wish that we would not take a wrong road," she said.

Many voices of urgent calls for an immediate withdrawal of Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) being currently deployed in Iraq were heard among participants at the rally. In closing, they adopted a statement calling for people's solidarity with those standing up to overcome such a crisis and make the Peace Constitution alive by stepping out firmly to oppose the worsening revision of the Constitution and protect its war-renouncing Article 9 for peace.

Prior to the rally in the afternoon, many of the Christians and other individuals walked around the National Diet building before noon while ringing their bells for peace, singing, "Wishing for peace of all, praying for peace of all." (by Hisashi Yukimoto)



Photo by H.Y.

Christians in Korea and Japan Seek Path for Peace in North-East Asia

In response to an offer from Christians in Korea, who fought with Japanese Christians for the country's democratization during the 1970's and 80's, the NCCJ Committee on International Relations held a symposium on April 3, 2004 on the history and future prospects for peace in North-East Asia.

At the symposium, Professor Choi Yong-sil, a theologian at the Anglican Church University in Korea, spoke from a biblical standpoint, emphasizing that peace in North-East Asia can be achieved by people from six key countries, including North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China, Russia, and the United States, working in mutual solidarity. The governments of these nations have recently held six-channel diplomatic talks in the region.

"What matters is whether we can really give up the interests of our own countries and ourselves," she stated.

She felt strongly that Christians should be as determined as the Apostle Paul, who said "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ" (Romans 9.3)... Christians should be willing to take radical action and accept the consequences (Luke 23.2-5, 14), even going as far as to suffer loss of life as Jesus did for the sake of brothers and sisters in North Korea.

Chang Yoon-jae, a professor of theology at Ewa Women's University, pointed out that the biblical concept of shalom involves peace based on social justice and the integrity of all brought about by mutual sharing. He referred to U.S. hegemony in the region as the context of the solidarity between Korea and Japan. "The idea of humanity created in the image of God is being altered by U.S.-centered global capitalism, causing further poverty and increasing the need for military expansion," he said. "We should solve the nuclear crisis in North Korea by

diplomatic efforts and avoid the use of military means."

He added that Christians in North-East Asia should hold a six-channel ecumenical conference for peace in the region, referring to the important role of Christians in Japan in prior ecumenical dialogue on the unification of the Koreans. He suggested that we promote the use of solar power as an alternative to the present dependence on oil, which he sees as a primary cause of the conflict in Iraq and the territorial dispute between China and Japan over Sakaku Island in the East China Sea. "What we need is Pax Christi (the peace of Christ) based on justice flowing like a river, not Pax Americana or Pax Japonica," he concluded.

Professor Lee Joong-Wong, a political scientist at Rikkyo (St. Paul's) University in Tokyo, took the position that "multi-staged diplomatic responses are necessary to solve not only the present issue of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea but also human rights issues in the region as a whole."

Aiko Ogoshi, a feminist professor at Kinki University in Osaka, stressed the importance of "her-story" as opposed to "his-story," and the restoration of the dignity of Korean women who were victimized as sexual slaves by the Japanese military from 1904-1945 when Japan colonized Korea.

The coordinator of the meeting, Atsushi Okamoto, stated that we should courageously work for peace in the region. The monthly magazine which he edits, *Sekai*, covered a series of reports on the democratization of Korea by an anonymous author using the pen name T. K. Sei. Professor Sei, who taught at Tokyo Women's Christian University during the period of democratization, recently revealed his identity as Dr. Chi Myung-gwan, a leading Christian historian and Japanologist in Korea.

Ecumenical guests and leaders from Korea, who fought for the democratization of the country, were introduced at the end of the symposium.

Reiko Suzuki, moderator of the NCCJ, advised churches to tell North Korea that they wish to "do their utmost" in view of the trends toward rising Japanese nationalism and economic sanctions. (by H.Y.)

"Letters From South Korea" - An International Joint Project That Worked

(Editor's note: This booklet is available at NCCJ which includes an interview with Dr. Chi Myung-gwan who was the secret author of "Letters From South Korea" during the time in the 70s and 80s when South Korea was run by an oppressive military dictatorship. His pen name was "T.K." These letters were written in secret and published in Sekai magazine. Although he was living in Japan, he was involved in the democratization movement in South Korea and with getting information in and out. A number of church people in Japan, North America, and Korea encouraged and helped him. Mr. Oh Jae-Shik, Mr. Kim Yong-Bock, Rev. Pharis Harvey, Mr. Kurata Masahiko, people at WCC and KCCJ, CCA, and NCCJ also helped with sharing of information and documentation.)

"Letters from South Korea" was a 15-year long series of moving stories carried in the monthly magazine, "*Sekai*," from the May issue of 1973 to the March issue of 1988. These articles told the world about the Korean politicians, religious persons, writers, and journalists, students and workers who stood up against their nation's military regime in pursuit of restoring democracy. The letters were written by a certain "T. K." This underground correspondence was organized by a Christian group in Korea, and "T. K." in Tokyo at that time, compiled the documents together with others and wrote the letter. Last year, in 2003, the Christian group in Korea held a press conference and disclosed the whole story of the underground project. "T. K." was identified as Dr. Chi Myung-gwan.

"Letters from South Korea" was a great achievement for Korea's democratization movement, and at the same time, it was a product of unprecedented solidarity between the Christians of Japan and of Korea. The whole scope of the project needs to be re-appropriated in light of the church history of these two countries. It also was the product of a global ecumenical Christian network since so many people, including missionaries and individuals from Europe and North America, were involved and committed to the project.

NCC-J is very happy to present the translation of the interview article with Dr. Chi Myung-gwan, which was carried by "*Sekai*" in September 2003. The interview coincides with the rise in Japan of a dangerous new style of nationalism. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had promised, before the general election held last year that the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) will have its draft proposal for amending the Constitution ready in two years. It is Article 9, the "war denouncing clause," that bears the most upon the future course of Japan. As democratization in Korea becomes more mature, this might be a time for Japanese Christians to ask our Korean friends for support of "democratization" in Japan. We are standing at the crossroads with two choices: will we choose life and create a culture of lasting peace, or will we choose the road of destruction and spread a chain of violence and war? We fervently hope for the former, working towards peace and reconciliation. Some copies of an English translation of the booklet SPECIAL INTERVIEW With Dr. Chi Myung-gwan (*Sekai*, Septem-

ber 2003, No 718) "Letters from South Korea: An International Joint Project That Worked" are available on the JCAN webpage at <http://www.jca.apc.org/ncc-j/english/jcan/index.html>.

Rev. Toshimasa Yamamoto
General Secretary, NCC-Japan
April 1, 2004

To see interviews of Japanese Christians in JCAN issue on Japanese Christian Identity-Personal Portraits of Faith, go to website: <http://www.ucanews.com/html/fabc-papers/fabc-86.htm>



Court Dismisses Suit Over Abduction of Moonists by Pastors - Christian Group Issues Further Warning

The Christ Weekly reported that on January 23, the Yokohama District Court dismissed a suit filed against two pastors of the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ) by the Unification Association for "unlawful abduction and confinement causing abandonment of faith." The suit, claiming damages of 200 million yen (nearly 2 million U. S. dollars) also named parents, relatives, and a counselor in addition to the two Kyodan (UCCJ) pastors, all of whom, the Association claimed, conspired to encourage the female follower to leave the cult.

Meanwhile, the Christian Coalition on the issue of the Unification Association, a group of six denominations against the Moonists, published a "victim prevention" pamphlet for students which was released in February. (by H. Y.)

20th Anniversary of UCCJ (Kyodan) and KCCJ Covenant Feted

On Sunday, Feb 8, a service was held at the Korean Christian Church in Japan's Tokyo Church to celebrate the anniversary of the Covenant of Missionary Cooperation between the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) and the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ). About 155 participants from the two denominations attended.

The mission covenant's three Articles of Cooperation are:

- 1) Mutual recognition for each other's orders of ministry and administration of the sacraments;
- 2) Mutual pledges to cooperate in every aspect of mission and;
- 3) Mutual cooperation in involvement with human rights issues for Korean residents in Japan.

As colleague churches in this land, our common prayer is that we may work together in deeper commitment with the Lord as we move towards our 30th and 40th anniversaries and that we may develop even stronger ties in mission cooperation.

by Rev. Hiroshi Kawaii, pastor at Nishi Aria Church
Member, Committee on Korean residents in Japan and Japan-Korea Relations

(Editor's note: The full article is printed on page one of the April 2004 Kyodan Newsletter, issue #327. The Kyodan Newsletter (KNL) is published five times a year. Address: 3-18-31 Nishi Waseda 2-chome, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-0051, JAPAN. Hazel Terhune, UMC missionary, is the editor of KNL. For subscriptions or back issues, email Hazel at knl-c@uccj.org

Letter to Iraq

A Message of Gratitude and Solidarity from the Interfaith Peace Network in Japan to the Islamic Clerics Association in Iraq

April 20, 2004

TO: Sheikh Abdel Salem Al Kubaissi/The Islamic Clerics Association in Iraq

We are grateful to learn that three Japanese civilians and two other Japanese who were taken as hostage were protected by the Islamic Clerics Association in Iraq and released. We share our joy together with many Japanese people on hearing the news.

It was reported in Japan that the Islamic Clerics Association patiently appealed to the militant group calling for the release of these individuals who were not cooperating with the US-led occupation of Iraq, from the standpoint of Islamic law and on a humanitarian basis. We, as religious persons who value most irreplaceable life, wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and pay our respects to the mediating role of the Islamic Clerics Association for the release of the Japanese this time.

We organized and established the "Interfaith Network for Peace" in 2002, fearing that the violence of war has been further justified in the name of justice and people's lives are treated merely as objects since the September 11 incident in the U.S. We made clear our position that we act on the basis of protecting life together with Christians, Buddhists and Muslims and others of different faiths. Our aim and goal is to spread our prayers for peace and expand the circle of action for peace and justice making. We consistently have been opposing the US attack on Iraq. We also are against the dispatch of Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) to Iraq and we have been conducting a signature campaign to oppose sending SDF to Iraq. We collected 12,000 signatures and submitted these petitions to Prime Minister Koizumi five times thus far.

We are grieved and pained by the report that in Falluja more than 900 Iraqis were killed in combat and the death toll among the U.S. troops has exceeded 80 in the last two weeks. What is especially serious is the fact that Iraqi people continue to die.

We maintain and demand that the Japanese government pull out the SDF from Iraq in accordance with our "war denouncing" Peace Constitution. They also should withdraw the SDF according to the special measure law on Iraq which clearly states that SDF cannot operate in "combat zone" as it is becoming clear that any place in Iraq can be called a "combat zone." We firmly believe that the weight and preciousness of life is the same regardless of the fact that one's language, religion, race, culture or the place of origin is different. Whatever the reasons are, nobody has the right to deprive anyone of his/her life. We human beings need to uphold reverence for the life of all living creatures. We hereby send our solidarity message to you praying that peace shall immediately prevail in Iraq over the violence. We also remember your work to protect the human dignity of Iraqi people in our prayers.

Members of Interfaith Peace Network:

Rev. Yukichi Ishikawa (Japan Religionists' Peace Conference)

Rev. Yoshinobu Ogawa (Christian Network for Peace)

Rev. Kenichi Otsu (Japan Christian Academy)

Mr. Kenzo Kimura (Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace)

Ms. Sachie Monma (Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace)

Rev. Shincho Shigeta (NPO Ayus-Network of Buddhism Volunteer on International Cooperation)

Rev. Takao Takeda (Nipponzan Myohoji)

Rev. Hideo Ishi (Lotus Buddhism International Society)

Rev. Masahiro Kishida (Asian Buddhism Conference for Peace Japan Center)

Rev. Eijo Yamato (The Religionist Association for Reviewing of Nuclear Power Policy)

Rev. Toshimasa Yamamoto (National Christian Council in Japan)

Tomisaka and NCCJ Center Release Publication on Aum Cultist Group

What Kind of Training Have You Gone Through?

This is the title of the book recently released by Tomisaka Christian Center and the NCCJ Center for the Study of Japanese Religions. After three years of collaborative studies, the volume was published coincidentally on the same day that Shoko Asahara, former leader of the doomsday cult group Aum Shinrikyo (now known as Alef), was sentenced to death for masterminding the cult's crimes. The group is known for the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system in March, 1995, as well as the abduction of citizens and the family of a lawyer who fought against Aum.

The authors include an international panel of twelve experts in the fields of psychology, religion, law, philosophy and journalism from Japan, Russia and Germany.

In the book, Professor Hideo Yuki, former director of the NCCJ Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, raises seven points to be considered in the context of Japanese society:

- 1) Why did Aum attract so many young people while Buddhism and Christianity have few of them?
- 2) Why did Aum have many knowledgeable scientists among its members and how was it possible for them to manufacture sarin gas?
- 3) Do groups like Aum, which is still continuing its activities after changing its name, have freedom of religion?
- 4) Should public criticism of groups like Aum be promoted as freedom of religion?
- 5) The issue of mind control, with reference to the relationship between Aum and society in comparison with the relationship between wartime Imperial Japan and the international community.
- 6) The issue of the necessity of religious education in public schools in Japan.
- 7) Police investigation and media reports on the Aum incident.

Professor Yuki writes that, while established religions are unable to provide young people with answers to their questions about the meaning and purpose of life in a materialistic society, Aum training seems to have offered mean-

ing which transcended the emptiness of modern affluent life styles.

He also states that no legal regulations should be imposed on such religious groups. However, he feels they should be subject to criticism by the public, adding that former Aum members should not be stereotyped as criminals by those assisting their re-entry into society.

Rev. Shozo Suzuki, Director General of the Tomisaka Christian Center, points out that the reason why the Aum incident become so big is still unclear. Modern Japanese society is a "complicit" and a "moral" society; that is, people with different values coexist in a common moral social fabric and crimes are covered up by particularizing them to certain groups in society and attributing causes and responsibility to what it calls "the other side" of society. These societal characteristics have contributed to the birth and development of Aum, and to the Aum incident itself.

Another contributor to the book, Rev. Makoto Shimura, a UCCJ pastor and chaplain of Chubu Gakuin College, writes about his experiences as pastoral counselor to families of Aum members and emphasizes the importance of listening to and accompanying them. "The fact that Christian pastors and Buddhist monks have worked together and collaborated with psychologists and lawyers has an ecumenical significance which is rare from a global perspective," says Rev. Shimura, adding that the previous experience of pastoral counselors with Moonists was useful in working with Aum counselees.

Professor Yoshimoto Terazono, a theologian at Seinan Gakuin University, discusses the eschatology of Aum from a theological viewpoint in his chapter stating that the eschatology of Aum developed on a social reform platform critical of materialistic society. The resulting spirituality was transformed into an eschatology of destruction and ultimately combined its predictions with incidents. "Christian eschatology is a ground of hidden hope that hardship never equals despair," he notes. Eschatology should not be dissolved into a hopeless catastrophe." (by H. Y.)

(Editor's note: The Tomisaka Christian Center is a research group that sprang from the work of the German East Asia Mission (Deutsche Ostasien Mission). Together with churches in East Asia and research groups in other countries, it undertakes interdisciplinary research into issues of Christian social ethics.

21st Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Prize is awarded each year to a worthy organization or individual working with other faiths for peace. This year a Roman Catholic bishop, His Grace John Baptist Odama of Uganda, received the prize of 20 million yen on behalf of the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI), which he chairs. An ecumenical and interfaith gathering of wellwishers, including the editor of JCAN, gathered at the Tokyo International Forum on May 11 for the presentation ceremony during which Bishop Odama accepted the peace prize for ARLPI.

The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative is based in northern Uganda and was established in 1998. War, violence and abuse have been the way of life for many in Uganda. Twenty thousand children have been kidnapped and forced to become soldiers. Abuses are committed daily against ordinary citizens. Fearing more violence, many have fled. The ARLPI promotes dialogue through prayer gatherings, peace rallies, assistance to war victims, education in refugee camps, training programs, conflict resolution training, programs to heal trauma, and the formation of interfaith peace committees with members of different religions including Islam and Christianity. The work of the ARLPI is not easy. It brings together some 400 volunteers, staff members and peace supporters who believe in ARLPI's motto, "Together for Peace."

Past recipients of the Niwano Peace Prize include Archbishop Helder Pessoa Camara of Brazil; Dr. Philip Potter of the Dominican Republic; Dr. Hildegard Goss-Mayr of Austria, honorary president of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation; Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Shalom of Israel, a cooperative village advancing peaceful coexistence between Jews and Palestinians; Dr. M. Aran of India; Marii Hasegawa, former president of the US branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Rev. Maha Ghosananda, a Buddhist priest in Cambodia; the Community of Saint Edigio in Italy, a Roman Catholic lay organization involved in a wide range of peace activities; the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland promoting reconciliation between Roman Catholics and Protestants; Dr. Kang Wong Yong of South Korea, a Presbyterian advocate of international inter-

faith dialogue; Rev. Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Melkite Catholic priest working for reconciliation in Israel; and Dr. Priscilla Elsworth, head of the Oxford Research Group.

The late Rev. Nikkyo Niwano was the founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, a major lay Buddhist organization. Rev. Niwano was well known as a socially engaged Buddhist who respected other religious beliefs and was a strong advocate of interreligious work for peace, urging the necessity of action at an international level on the basis of a religious spirit that transcends the barriers between denominations. He was one of the leaders of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) and the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF). Rissho Kosei-kai established the Niwano Peace Foundation, which awards the annual Niwano Peace Prize, with these goals in mind. The Niwano selection committee is made up of religious leaders from different countries who are involved in movements for peace and interreligious cooperation.

Niwano Peace Foundation Symposium 2004 in Kyoto

On May 14, the Niwano Peace Foundation Symposium 2004 was held at Kyoto Fumon Kaikan. The 220 people who attended heard a panel discussion on Uganda with the theme "New Challenge to Religious People - Conflict Resolution and The Role of Religious People."

NCCJ General Secretary, Rev. Toshimasa Yamamoto, moderated the event. After Bishop John Baptist Odama delivered a keynote address on the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative, panel members from Uganda shared their thoughts, perspectives and experiences in accordance with their own religious traditions. The discussion revolved around the importance of non-violence as a means of building peace, the hope for ongoing dialogue between two conflicting parties, and actual care and peacemaking efforts for the victims of conflict.

For information on Rissho Kosei-kai and its founder, Nikkyo Niwano, please see <http://www.rk-world.org>.



Bishop of Myanmar's Visit



From right to left: Rev. Hidefumi Kitani (NCC-J Executive Secretary for the Youth Committee, Urban Rural Mission, and Human Rights of Foreign Workers), Rev. Zothan Mawia (Bishop of Burma UMC) and Rev. Toshi Yamamoto, (General Secretary of NCCJ)

The Rev. Zothan Mawia, Bishop of the Methodist Church of Lower Myanmar, visited the offices of NCCJ on April 6, 2004, during his recent visit with Japanese Christian leaders and organizations on his way to attend the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in Pittsburgh. He shared the difficult situation facing the Christian churches in Myanmar which suffered from a loss of leadership following the takeover by General Ne Win in 1962 when a socialist military government replaced the former Burma that had become independent from British rule after WWII. All church-related schools and institutions were subsequently nationalized and missionaries were expelled in 1964.

Civil unrest eventually leads to the formation of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which replaced the former Ne Win regime in 1988. The junta is still in control despite the 1990 landslide victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) under the leadership of Suu Kyi, daughter of Aung San who led Burma to independence in 1948. Since November, 1997, the junta has reorganized itself under the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) which is currently drafting a new constitution.

The Methodist Church of Lower Myanmar (MCLM) was related to the Methodist Church in the U.S. until

the government took over mission schools and expelled all foreign missionaries. The Methodist Church in Upper Myanmar (MCUM) was related to the British Methodist Church and has a much larger constituency. The membership of MCLM is listed as 2,102 with a constituency of 3,270, while in Upper Myanmar there are 14,610 members with a constituency of 26,857 (figures taken from the World Methodist Council Handbook). The Church in Lower Myanmar has four basic ethnic/language groups: Chinese, Burmese, and Indian with one English-speaking church. Bishop Mawia was called from Upper Myanmar following the exodus of most lead-

ers to be the interim pastor of the English-speaking church in Yangon. He ended up serving there for 21 years until becoming elected bishop in 2000.

It is very rare for a leader of the church in Myanmar to travel abroad, especially to the U.S. due to the tensions related to U.S. economic sanctions imposed as a means of protesting the violation of basic human rights in Myanmar. But Bishop Mawia was fortunate to obtain permission to attend the upcoming UMC General Conference. In spite of the severe financial restrictions facing the church, the bishop has placed high priority on leadership training for the future. One urgent need is the acquisition of 6,000 theological books for the library of the proposed school of theology, which are required by the government in order to become accredited.

The bishop issued an open invitation to the celebration planned for October 22-24, 2004, to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the Methodist Church in Lower Myanmar, in hopes of showing the solidarity of Christians from around the world. One highlight of the event will be a session for each church to share its own involvements in world mission. Anyone interested in donating theological books or attending the Anniversary Celebration should contact JCAN for further information. (by George W. Gish, Jr., UMC Missionary)

Leading Feminist Theologian Visits Japan

A series of lectures was given in Japan by Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, who is one of the world's leading feminist theologians. A Roman Catholic originally from Germany, Dr. Schüssler Fiorenza now teaches at Harvard Divinity School. She has written over 20 books and is well known for her pioneering work in biblical interpretation and feminist theology. Her teaching and research focuses on questions of biblical and theological epistemology, hermeneutics, rhetoric, and the politics of interpretation, as well as on issues of theological education, radical equality, and democracy.



The Committee members and others for the Lecture Series by Celebration Dinner with Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza at FujiMama's restaurant in Tokyo. Dr. Schüssler Fiorenza is at the head of the table. L to R: Akihiko Omori, Sr. Haruko Ishikawa, Dr. Satoko Yamaguchi, Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto, Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Dr. Yuko Taniguchi, Rev. Kaori Oshima, Rev. Akira Takahashi, Junko Matsuura, and Rev. Shigeko Yamano.

The lecture titles, places, and dates of the lectures were: "Love Endures Everything - Does It?" at the Osaka Higashi-Umeda Kyodan Church, on March 23, 2004, "The Ekklesia of Women" at Kyoto Notre Dame University, March 26, "Resisting Violence - Engendering Easter" at International Christian University Church in Mitaka, Tokyo, March 28, "A Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation" at Tokyo Union Church, March 29, "Bread of Wisdom or Stone of Truth: Biblical Interpretation as a Site of Struggle" at Sophia University in Yotsuya, Tokyo, March 31.

At the lecture held at Tokyo Union Church on March 29, Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza emphasized the importance of what she calls "a critical feminist theology of liberation" against exclusiveness and silence forced on women in the church and the world.

"All were created in the image of God and are cherished equally by God," she said, questioning women's forced silence in the churches which she said is rooted in the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14.34.

Asked by a Japanese male participant at Tokyo Union Church how men should behave in their lives to become a feminist, she said, "They should do whatever they can to rectify the situation."

Many of the people who came to hear the lectures were inspired to think of theology in new ways and to look at how feminist theological interpretation can challenge the churches in Japan.

There will be a publication of her lectures in Japanese by Shinkyo in 2005. Her interpreter for the lecture

series was Dr. Satoko Yamaguchi. Dr. Yamaguchi has translated two of Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's books into Japanese ("*In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*," and "*Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*.")

Dr. Satoko Yamaguchi, Co-Director of the Center for Feminist Theology & Ministry in Japan formed an ecumenical committee, organized the lecture series, and recruited members and volunteers for the Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza Project Committee (ESF Committee for short).

The ESF Project Committee is made up of Catholic, Anglican/Episcopal, and Protestant members listed below (in alphabetical order):

- Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto, United Methodist missionary at NCCJ, Editor of JCAN, and pastor at West Tokyo Union Church
- Sr. Shizue Hirota, Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz, Vice-chair, Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious of Japan, Board member of Catholic Council for Justice and Peace
- Sr. Haruko Ishikawa, Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Director, Department for Social Concerns, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan
- Sr. Yoshiko Matsuda, Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Secretary of Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace
- Ms. Junko Matsuura, Anglican/Episcopal church member and Chairperson of the NCCJ Women's Committee
- Rev. Kaori Oshima, Director of NCCJ's Division of Christian Education and member of the United

Church of Christ in Japan

Rev. Akira Takahashi, Pastor at Asagaya Seikokai Church (Anglican/Episcopal)

Dr. Satoko Yamaguchi, Co-Director of Center for Feminist Theology & Ministry in Japan, lecturer, author, and member of the UCCJ, interpreter for the lecture series and translator of Dr. Schussler Fiorenza's books. *(Editor's addition: one of Dr. Satoko Yamaguchi's books, "Mary and Martha; Women in the World of Jesus," by Orbis Press, 2002, will be reviewed in the next issue of JCAN)*

Rev. Shigeko Yamano, Rector at Tokyo All Saints' Church (Episcopal), one of the first three women to be ordained priests in Nippon Seikokai (Anglican/

Episcopal Church in Japan), professor at the Central Theological College.

Numerous other people helped - some who were not on the ESF Committee such as Mr. Akihiko Omori, a seminary student at the Central Theological College, and Dr. Yuko Taniguchi of the Japan Bible Society. The experience of the Committee was empowering for many of us as we connected and networked with one another. Feminist theology is inclusive of both men and women. We pray that through her lectures, Dr. Shüssler Fiorenza not only encouraged but also challenged many in Japan to look at scripture and God in creative, critical, and contextual ways. *(by H.Y. and C.G.Y.)*

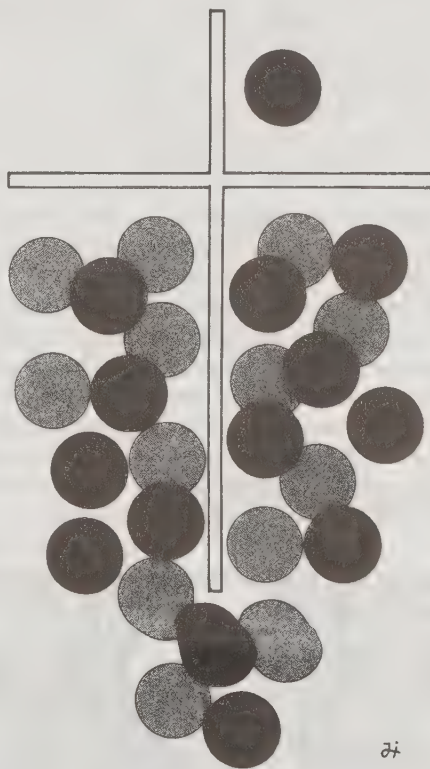
Women's Prayer Circle

Women's Prayer Circle meets once a month on Saturdays from 2-5 p.m. (which includes the teatime at the end). The Women's Prayer Circle meets at a Catholic convent Enjo Shudokai in Ichigaya, Tokyo.

It is a time to express personal concerns especially around women. The format is that different members take turns leading a creative liturgy or worship time or community building. Silence, liturgical dance, prayer, and other creative forms of worship are often part of the Women's Prayer Circle. The language used is Japanese although occasionally songs are in other languages depending on who may be taking the lead. The women are a mixture of Catholic and Protestant from all walks of life.

The Women's Prayer Circle is different at each gathering. Each woman gives her own ideas, style, expression of worship or community building and the women are given an opportunity to share their own experiences of God from a woman's perspective.

For information on the Women Prayer Circle, contact Kazue Yano: kzyn@k2.dion.ne.jp.



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Center for Feminist Theology & Ministry in Japan Upcoming Seminar

The Center for Feminist Theology & Ministry in Japan will sponsor a one day seminar on the theme of "Christianity and Sex: the 'Comfort women' issue as Our Present Day Issue" on Saturday July 24, 10:30 am-5:30 pm at Japan Biblical Theological Seminary in Mejiro, Tokyo. The speakers are: Kikue Takahashi, Sachiko Kanematsu, Yoshihisa Kasahara, Hisako Kinukawa. Admission fee: 1000 yen. In Japanese, but English help available. Email Co-Directors: Satoko Yamaguchi and Hisako Kinukawa for more information. satoko125@u01.gate01.com, hkinukawa@nifty.ne.jp.

Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center in Tokyo

Yayori Matsui's Women's Museum for Peace

Yayori Matsui was a journalist, activist, author of many books, lecturer at many universities, and a Christian (her father was a Kyodan (UCCJ) minister). The kanji of her name "Yayori" means in Japanese "to live according to Jesus." She lived her life to the fullest, helping others, and followed the words of Jesus in her favorite scripture verse in Matthew 25:40: "Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." She was known for her articles, documentation, and research on human rights, women's issues, and environmental issues. Yayori Matsui passed away at the age of 68 in December 2003 of liver cancer (See JCAN issue #733 with Yayori Matsui's farewell letter and obituary) but her memory lives on through the center she established, the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center in Tokyo, the Women's Museum for Peace, and in the lives of the many people she worked with over the years.

Matsui started working in 1961 for the Asahi Shimbun and worked for 30 years. For the first decade she covered social issues and was one of the first reporters to file stories on Japan's use of thalidomide - a sedative that can cause birth defects - and Minamata Disease, a neurological ailment caused by mercury poisoning resulting from industrial waste in Kumamoto Prefecture's Minamata Bay. Her interest in social issues never wavered even after her retirement in 1994 and she continued to work on various projects, one which was the effort to identify Japanese fathers of Filipino children using DNA analysis.

Yayori Matsui founded the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center in 1995. The Center started a museum, which is a non-government organization, and holds a large collection of Yayori Matsui's work. The museum will make public the videotaped testimonies of women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese Army during WWII (Historians estimate that there were about 200,000 "comfort women," as they are euphemistically called in Japan.)

The museum also hopes to use the Internet to exchange and post information about NGOs, antiwar activities and peace education. People who have experienced the war are donating or lending war-related materials, photographs, documents, and diaries to the museum. Matsui also left many of her own books, documents, and notes for the museum. Matsui wanted military atrocities recorded and remembered lest they happen again. The museum hopes to open in 2006 if enough funds are raised.

Matsui and other activists organized a mock trial called the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo in 2000 to clarify that the comfort women system was a crime against humanity and to pressure the Japanese government to take legal responsibility. (See JCAN issue #728 on the Women's International War Crimes tribunal.) The tribunal found the late Emperor guilty of approving the policy of allowing institutionalized slavery. However Matsui was infuriated when the Japanese news media refused to cover or publicize the event and filed a lawsuit against state broadcaster NHK, charging falsified reports. The suit is still pending.

"Perhaps it was from fear of the three taboos of the Emperor, comfort women, and feminism," she told the *Shukan Kinyobi* magazine the week before her death, "In an informational society, no media coverage is the equivalent of nothing happening."

Her dream before her death was to see the museum open. The museum's motto is "Towards a 21st Century Without War or Violence Against Women."

Also a powerful video tape of the final weeks before her death was made by Violence Against Women in War-Network Japan (VAWW-Net) and tells her story in her own words: her life, struggle with death, and hopes for her work to continue. For more information: vaww-net-japan@jca.apc.org, <http://www.jca.apc.org/vaww-net-japan>
Telephone: (03) 3369-6866



Nuclear Power Plant

Stop the operation of the nuclear reprocessing facility at Rokkasho, Asia's largest plant! It is designed to reprocess the spent nuclear fuel from 52 nuclear reactors from across Japan. The total amount of spent fuel it will process is estimated to be about 900 to 1,000 tons of uranium per year. The Rokkasho plant is scheduled to begin uranium testing in June 2004. One of many serious matters of dispute is the plant's ability to produce nuclear weapons. People are concerned about the situation in North Korea, but what about Japan?

In addition, more nuclear facilities and an interim storage plant are being planned as part of the plutonium separation cycle in this area of Shimokita Peninsula in Aomori Prefecture. All the nuclear facilities are closely linked together. The potential danger increases with each new construction. Why is the project progressing? Because there is money involved. The electric companies have offered billions of yen as compensation to residents, created job opportunities, and a provided a support fund for local festivals.

This has set off a number of serious phenomena, such as the division of local people into groups that oppose and hate each other, widening the gap between the rich and the poor, and the construction of odd or inadequate facilities that will be financially unstable. There is a taboo against speaking out. Only a few are candid about their stances. It could be said that this is another foul act of building a Tower

of Babel. A simple question arises: Why here, far from the city; why not there, the place nearest the need? From what I have learned, the chosen and imposed locations for nuclear plants all over the world are in degraded and impoverished areas. This similarity is obvious throughout the world in the industrialization process.

The history of the Shimokita area reminds me of the indigenous people of the United States, Taiwan, and Australia, who are also victims of nuclear industrialization. I especially remember the stories about the aboriginal people living near an Australian uranium mine that were shared by a group of International Peace Pilgrims at a meeting sponsored by the National Christian Council in Japan at the end of April 2004. On that occasion, participants from Protestant as well as from Zen and Nichiren Buddhist backgrounds, transcending their racial and religious differences, gathered to offer prayers and share experiences with one another. During the gathering, a torch lit from a fire kept burning from the time of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima was placed in the center of the circle. As participants representing various religions, and those of no religious affiliation, shared prayers, songs, messages, and tears, each one of us began to experience a sense of hope.

Naoto Ikesako, Tanabu Church, in Ou District.

Condensed from the Kyodan Newsletter, Issue #328, June 2004. For full article and photo contact the Kyodan (UCCJ) office. Email knl-c@uccj.org

Asia Sunday

Asia Sunday is a commemoration of the birth of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), on 24th of May 1959. Since 1974, CCA has set aside the Sunday before Pentecost as Asia Sunday as a day to highlight concerns in Asia, and as a day to remember churches, councils and ecumenical partners in Asia and elsewhere. Churches may pick any day as Asia Sunday and offer prayers for Asia.

The theme for this year is "Serving Together Beyond Boundaries" and a booklet with liturgy, prayers and suggested worship ideas is available as a resource.

According to CCA General Secretary, Dr AHN Jae Woong, the theme was chosen "...since we have so many boundaries that we live compartmentalized lives. These include religious, ethnic, socio-political and ideological boundaries. We tend to confine ourselves within these boundaries. Through the focus of Asia Sunday 2004, we wish to share that serving together is a step to breaking down all kinds of boundaries."

In Japan, the Youth committee of the NCCJ together with Rev. Hidefumi Kitani, staff for the NCCJ Youth Desk, (kitani@jca.apc.org) organized an Asia Sunday worship

service in Japanese on June 6 at Sugamotokiwa Church (UCCJ) in Tokyo. The

NCCJ committee translated parts of the CCA worship booklet as a resource and included these goals in their worship service:

- to cross boundaries in terms of race, sexual orientation, class, and nationality
- to build an image for a new model of Christian community in order to live together
- to reduce all types of violence

Guest speakers at the worship service were Mr. Mohammad Hassani and Mrs. Roya Hassami from Afghanistan, who are the owners of an Afghanistan restaurant in Tokyo, and Mr. Feridon, from Iran, who is in the process of seeking refugee status in Japan. Although these speakers are of the Islamic faith, the youth who listened to their testimony prayed together for peace and reconciliation in the world.

To order booklets contact the Christian Conference of Asia, E-mail: cca@cca.org.hk. Website: www.cca.org.hk



Kimigayo and Hinomaru: Objections to the National Anthem and Flag

MANY Christians in Japan see it as a violation of their faith to be forced to sing *Kimigayo* (the national anthem) or stand for *Hinomaru* (the national flag) because it is seen as a symbol of the return of Japanese nationalism. The flag brings back painful memories of Japan military aggression and some people see it as a return to Japan's nationalism. Christians in Japan see it as a violation of their faith to be forced to sing the anthem or to hang the flag.

The "teaching guidelines" of the Education Ministry requires that it checks each school to see if its instructions are being followed every year and that the *Hinomaru* flag is being raised and *Kimigayo* is being sung. It checks on the behavior of teachers, making sure they do not influence the students with their views.

The Tokyo metropolitan board of education has thus far reprimanded 57 teachers, assistant principals and principals at eight high schools for failing to inform pupils properly that they must stand and sing the "*Kimigayo*."

It is unusual in that it is the first time teachers have been punished for the behavior of students who refused to stand during the anthem. On May 25, 43 teachers and 14 assistant principals and principals were punished.

The school board said it will punish 10 more principals and teachers at five high schools, including a school for the disabled, saying that, among other things, teachers allegedly told pupils that they did not have to stand up.

The education ministry's curriculum guidelines are the basis for the order issued by the school board in October. The order requires all Tokyo government-run schools to display the *Hinomaru* and sing *Kimigayo* at all enrollment and graduation ceremonies.

Christian schools, both Protestant and Catholic, also have to deal with this issue of whether to use the *Hinomaru* or sing the *Kimigayo*. According to Rev. Kaori Oshima, Director of the NCCJ Division of Christian Education, many Protestant teachers working in public schools, both elementary school and high schools, are now struggling with these issues.

For example, one Christian elementary teacher attended a graduation ceremony with a blue ribbon, the symbol of freedom of faith and thoughts, on her suit.

Because of that, she was punished with other teachers by the board of education. The board of education charged that she did not concentrate her work as teacher during ceremony by putting on the blue ribbon. She is taking this issue to the court.

The Christian Center for Response to Asian Issues (CCRAI, a NCCJ Center which closed three years ago due to lack of funds) published a special edition of *Asia Tsushin* in English on "Christian Responses to the Rising Japanese Nationalism" in 2000. In that issue of *Asia Tsushin*, there was an article by Mr. Makoto Iijima, a member of the Kyodan (UCCJ), and the leader of the Network of Christian Teachers, Students and Citizens Against the Imposing the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* (see the Japanese website: <http://www1.ocn.ne.jp/~sinryaku/hinomaruno.htm>)

The Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace (JCCJP) sent a letter to Catholic schools in 2001 to ask them to "reconsider" using the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo*. Some Catholic schools do not hoist the flag but instead begin their ceremonies with a prayer and a blessing. Another school located in Osaka uses the liturgy of the Word in graduation ceremonies rather than use the *Kimigayo*. However other Catholic schools have chosen to display the Japanese flag along with the flag of the Vatican in their auditorium and also sing the anthem.

The JCCJP chairman, Bishop Matsuura Goro of Osaka, who said "Free discussion of the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* is evidence of a free society. If we cannot have that discussion, our society is in trouble. The problem is taboo as nationalism has grown in Japanese society. The *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* have become a *fumie*, a tool of the state and the government." (*Fumie* were religious icons that were used to find Christians during the age of persecution in Japan. Those who refused to stamp on the *fumie* were arrested as Christians.)

Principal Sister Kamata Ronju at Notre Dame Girls High School in Kyoto said the suicide of a principal in Hiroshima over the legislation setting the use of the national flag and anthem reminded her of her childhood during the war when "it was difficult for people to speak the truth about their beliefs." Sr Kamata also said, "Compelling the use of the *Hinomaru* will distort education. However, the more important and hidden problems are people's humanity and view of the world. We should

educate children who can say 'no' bravely when they think something is wrong. That is the kind of education we need."

For more information on the use of Hinomaru and Kimigayo, contact the NCC-J Division of Christian Education: NcceOshima@aol.com.

(Editor's note: All of the information on the Catholic schools for this article was taken from the March 2004 issue of Japan Catholic News, a monthly English Newsletter of Japan and International Christian news and published by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Japan, Social Communications Office, Japan Catholic Center 10-10 Shiomi 2 chome, Koto -ku, Tokyo 135-8585. For subscription information email: jcn@cbej.catholic.jp)

Position Statement

We Oppose the Compulsory Use of *HINOMARU* (Japanese National Flag) and *KIMIGAYO* (Japanese National Anthem)

"As for us, our hope is that God will put us right with him; and this is what we wait for by the power of God's spirit working through our faith." (GALATIANS 5:5)

At the Executive General Committee meeting of the 35th General Assembly on 27th of May 2004, the National Christian Council in Japan took the position to oppose the compulsory use of the *Hinomaru* and the *Kimigayo* and called upon its member churches and organizations to take up this challenge together.

What is Happening

After the national anthem and flag law was put forth in August 1999, the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education issued protocols for the *Hinomaru* and the *Kimigayo* at public school ceremonies in October 2003. In April 2004, it punished teachers who refused to sing and play the piano for the *Kimigayo* at the graduation ceremony of public schools in Tokyo. It even punished teachers whose students did not stand up to sing the *Kimigayo*.

These acts of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government contradict the word of late-Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi who clarified that the national anthem and flag law will not be carried out by force. They violate freedom of thought and freedom of conscience (Article 19) and the freedom of religion (Article 20) as guaranteed in the Constitution.

They are also violating the Article 14 - freedom of thought, conscience and religion - of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted in 1989 and ratified by Japan in 1994. In an environment like this, we cannot expect that there will be respect for uniqueness of each child at school, which is essential for the growth of children.

Punishment of teachers is oppressive and affects the children who are developing their own ideas about the anthem and flag.

Japan has become a military superpower. The Japanese government has continuously damaged the Constitution which embraces the aspiration for peace. It has dispatched troops to Iraq, the Prime Minister goes to worship at the Yasukuni shrine as one of his public functions, and the *Hinomaru* and the *Kimigayo* are made compulsory at public schools. We, Japanese Christians, as well as Japanese citizens of other faiths working for peace, have a great anxiety over this situation. We note that, among those who were punished for refusing the *Hinomaru* and the *Kimigayo*, are teachers who struggle based on his/her Christian faith. We also note that there are children who are struggling to keep their faith despite huge pressures. We Christians recognize the challenges they are facing as our own.

We act upon reflections of our past deeds

The *Hinomaru* and the *Kimigayo* were symbols of the imperial militarism which committed aggressive wars, based on the State Shinto. We Japanese invaded neighboring countries and killed innocent citizens while singing the *Kimigayo* anthem under the *Hinomaru* flag. We Japanese Christians were forced to acknowledge the emperor above God, and we accepted to worship the emperor at the Shinto shrines. By doing so, we took part in oppressing the peoples of Korea and other Asian and Pacific countries. We will never forget this history. We will keep the fact deep in our heart that we could not keep our faith in Christ who had been crucified on the cross, the only God, and that it resulted in the atrocious killing of our neighbors.

After the World War II, many member churches and organizations of NCC-J have repented and confessed this sin and asked for forgiveness from God and our neighbors. We have been seeking to live the gospel of reconciliation with sisters and brothers of Asian countries. To keep silent now about the acts of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is, for us, none other than dishonoring our

confessions. We will not repeat committing the same sin but be a witness of the truth of the gospel of reconciliation.

Our Confession

We have been listening to minorities in Japan and Asian countries. We came to believe that we, Christians in Japan, can never sing the *Kimigayo* nor can hold the *Hinomaru* in order to realize a society where people of different cultures and ethnicity can live together. We confessed before God that we will never repeat what we did towards people of Okinawa and Asian countries during the colonization and aggressive wars. We believe solely in God who sacrificed life for every human being and who rules history. We will never again turn our face from God for fear of pressure or criticisms.

National Christian Council in Japan calls for prayer and action

The NCCJ had been advocating against the legislation of the national anthem and flag, which is against the principles of pacifism, democracy and fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

Member churches and organizations of NCC-J are praying and acting together for the abolition of the compulsory use of the *Hinomaru* and the *Kimigayo* in solidarity with the punished teachers. We are committed to

supporting teachers and students who are suffering from the coercion.

NCCJ, which is composed of 33 churches and organizations, and the Christian Network for Peace, which includes the Catholic Church in Japan, Reformed Church in Japan, Japan Evangelical Association, and The Church of Christ In Japan, concluded "We denounce war as Christians" in the advent of 2003. Upon the recognition that the *Hinomaru* and the *Kimigayo* is part of the process of militarization, we call for resistance to coercion and opposition to the military cooperation of Japanese government in Iraq.

NCCJ is committed to stand firmly on the biblical gospel principles of reconciliation under the guidance of God, the only Lord of Christians, in solidarity with brothers and sisters of churches in Asia. We, Christians in Japan, are committed to work together to bring about the New Times based on the love and peace as Jesus showed.

"Come, our Creator, the Holy Spirit"

Ms. Reiko Suzuki
Moderator

Rev. Toshimasa Yamamoto
General Secretary
National Christian Council in Japan

In God's Image

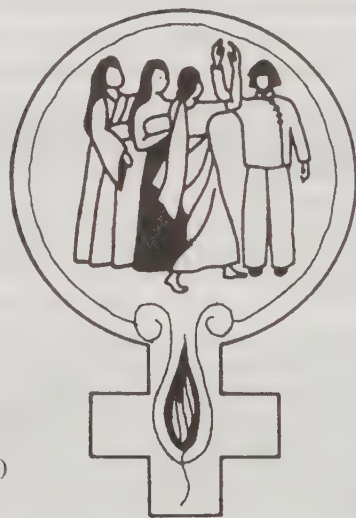
The Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology, an organization for women and women's organizations in Asia engaged in promoting Asian women's theologizing, publishes a quarterly journal called *In God's Image* (IGI). IGI is an Asian Christian women's effort to provide a forum for expressing our reality, our struggles, our faith reflections and aspirations for change.

Each issue of *In God's Image* follows certain themes, some themes of the past few issues were:

- Voices of the Unheard (Vo. 23 No. 2, June 2004)
- New Ways of Being Church (Vol 23 No 1 March 2004)
- Christ for Asian Women (Vol 22 No 4 December 2003)
- Health and Wholeness (Vol 22 No 2 June 2003)
- Women and Culture (Vol 22 No 1 March 2003)
- Asian Women Doing Theology (Vol 21 No 4 December 2002)
- Women Shaping the Future (Vol 21 No 3 September 2002)
- Women and Just Relationships (Vol 21 No 2 June 2002)

Japanese theologian, Dr. Hisako Kinukawa, is a Coordinating Team Member of AWRC.

For information or subscription, go to Website: www.awrc4ct.org. Email: enquiries@awrc4ct.org.



International Emails of Support for the Statement NCCJ Sent Out on Hinomaru and Kimigayo

Dear Toshi,

Greetings from the EKD-Church Office in Hanover where we were very impressed by the NCCJ's Statement on the flag and hymn issue. Thank you for sharing this with us. The German Protestant Churches are firmly committed to reconciliation and peace with the neighboring nations of Europe which were victims of aggression from German soil and by German people. We therefore understand what this issue means in the Asian context and we are most grateful for your testimony.

We wish your Churches courage under the guidance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fraternally yours,
Rev. Paul Oppenheim
Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)
Referat Asien - Australien - Pazifik
Kirchenamt der EKD
<http://www.ekd.de>

*** oOo ***

Dear Toshi:

Thank you for sending me the statement from NCCJ. In the present context where nationalism assumes the role of a religion along with globalization, your statement is prophetic. It is unfortunate that while the nationalist feelings of the underprivileged and the marginalized have been denied and sometimes demolished violently, nationalist feelings are cultivated among the powerful to rationalize violent interventions of the hegemonic structures. You have shown the courage and we do hope that churches in other nations will learn from your example.

Thanks again, with kind regards,

Dr. MP Joseph
(Editor's note: Dr. MP Joseph is from south India and presently teaching at Chang Jung University in Tainan, Taiwan)

*** oOo ***

Dear friends in NCC Japan:

Allow me to congratulate and express my solidarity with the courageous decision of NCC Japan regarding the compulsory use of anthem and flag. I realize that this sort of action is becoming more and more difficult in Japan.

However, it is very gratifying to know that there are people in Japan and elsewhere who are willing and determined to take a stand on the ground of freedom of conscience.

We in Korea are currently involved in a debate and controversy over the conscience objection vis-a-vis compulsory military service. I hope our NCC can take the similar stand. God bless.

Rev. Dr. Park Sang Jung
(Editor's note: Rev. Park was the former General Secretary of Christian Conference of Asia. He now lives in Korea.)

*** oOo ***

Dear Toshi,

Thank you for sending the NCCJ's statement on Hinomaru and Kimigayo. I will share the statement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Braunschweig, one of our member churches which has a partnership relation to the Lutheran Church in Japan. I think you have met their bishop, Bishop Dr. Weber, during the Japanese-German Church Consultation last year.

I admire the NCCJ for taking such a clear position in this question. As the explanation to the statement points out, this question is related to the history of the Pacific war. Even 60 years later we still feel the wounds of the past which have not been healed.

With best wishes and warm regards, yours in Christ,

Rev. Inken Wöhlbrand
Lutheran Church Office (VELKD) and GNC/LWF
Desk for Mission and Development in Africa, Asia and Pacific
P.O.Box 51 04 09
D-30634 Hannover
Tel.: ++49-511-6261-224 • Fax: ++49-511-6261-411
E-mail: wöhlbrand@velkd.de

*** oOo ***

June 17, 2004

Dear Toshi:

Thank you so much for sending us a copy of your position statement on Hinomaru and Kimigayo. We note with keen interest your opposition and we think it is very courageous

of NCCJ to take such a position. We will reflect on your statement and talk about it with our constituents.

On a different note, a small group is going to meet in two weeks to discuss the NCCP-NCCJ Visit. After this meeting, I shall share with you what our thoughts are about the program. Thank you for your patience.

Our best wishes to Reiko and the rest of your staff.

Very respectfully yours,
Ms. Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes
General Secretary
National Council of Churches in the Philippines

BOOK REVIEW

The Handbook of Christianity in Japan

Mark R. Mullins, Editor

Publisher: Brill Academic Publishers; (August 2003) ISBN: 9004131566

If you are interested in learning more about Christianity's encounter in Japan for your research, then this is a book that you must have for your library. *The Handbook of Christianity in Japan* is a collaborative and multi-disciplinary (theology, history, sociology, literature) effort that draws on the work of Japanese studies scholars based in Japan, Europe, and North America. All are established scholars working on some dimension of Christianity in Japan. The extensive bibliography will help any researcher. The list of references in the back alone are worth the price of the book. *The Handbook of Christianity in Japan* was listed as one of the top ten books of missiology in the International Bulletin of Mission Research.

Dr. Mark Mullins, the editor, writes in the preface that, "as a world religion that travels the globe, Christianity has shaped various cultures and societies, while at the same time being reshaped and transformed by local cultures." He says that Christianity is a "latecomer to Japan's religious scene" but is not the only "foreign born" religion in Japan, as "Buddhism, Confucianism, and the numerous new religions have been transplanted from abroad. Without disregarding the importance of various indigenous folk and Shinto traditions, the larger and more fascinating story of religion in Japan is the one of the reception, impact, and adaptation of foreign-born religions in relation to native traditions and cultural concerns. The aim of this volume is to provide students and scholars of religion and Asian studies with a guide to research on Christianity within this larger context of Japanese religious history, culture, and society."

Dr. Mullins explains that in a country where less than one percent are Christian, Christianity has been highly

influential and has "made an impact on Japanese society, culture, institutions, and even other religions."

The book is broken into three parts:

- Part I. "Christianity in Japanese History," covers the historical studies of mission churches and institutions
- Part II. "Christianity in Japanese Society and Culture," looks at the larger role of Christianity through literature, education, social welfare, politics, and inter-religious encounters.
- Part III. "Resources for Study of Christianity in Japan," provides a guide to valuable resources, publications, and journals.

You can purchase the book through Amazon.com as well as other books by Dr. Mark Mullin which may be of interest to JCAN readers.

Other books by Dr. Mark Mullins are:

Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements (Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture) by Mark R. Mullins (November 1998)

Religion and Society in Modern Japan: Selected Readings (Nanzan Studies in Asian Religions) by Mark R. Mullins, et al (December 1993)

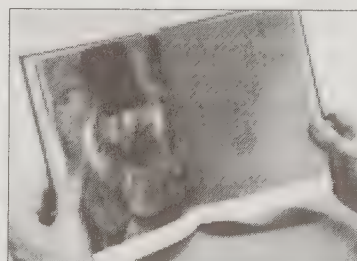
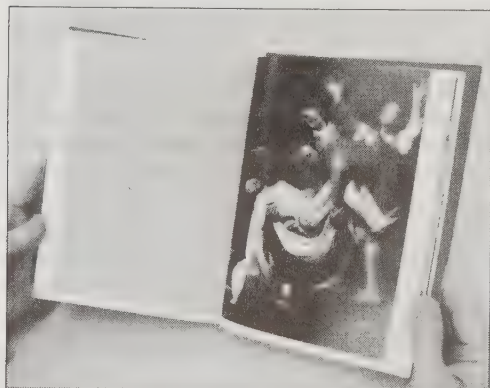
Religion and Social Crisis in Japan: Understanding Japanese Society Through the Aum Affair by Robert J. Kisala (Editor), Mark R. Mullins (Editor) August 2001)

Christian Museum of Art at Hand: The Art Bible

These days, a growing number of people in Japan do not bother to go to see da Vinci's *The Last Supper* or Rembrandt's *Moses Smashing the Tables of the Law* in a Christian museum of art. They find them nearer at hand in a Bible. The *Art Bible* (photos: <http://www.bible.or.jp/artbible/index.html>), pub-

lished by the Japan Bible Society (JBS) last year, has a collection of 325 famous Christian pictures, mostly from the Western art of fifteenth to seventeenth century, that go along with biblical verses in Japanese as well as a list of the artists and the museums of those pictures.

"We hope that through the Art Bible Japanese people who have been greatly influenced particularly by Western pictures (culture) since Meiji Era will come in touch with the words of the Bible in which their philosophies are rooted," says the JBS. With approximately 25,000 copies being sold as of May 19, it is now a good introduction to the Bible and Christian art for many art lovers, overseas travelers and non-Christians in Japan. 528 pages, all in full colors. ¥2,800 (plus tax). Hisashi Yukimoto



Uchimura's Books Available in English

Some limited copies of a series of on-demand editions of *The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura*, the founder of the Japanese Mukyokai (the Non-Church) Group, are available in English at Kyobunkwan, including an English location map with photos) Christian Books Department in Ginza, Tokyo (<http://www.kyobunkwan.co.jp>.) The series consist of the following seven volumes:

- Vol.1 *How I Became a Christian: Out of My Diary* - ¥4,725
 - Vol.2 *Representative Men of Japan* - ¥3,570
 - Vol.3 *Alone with God and Me* - ¥6,090
 - Vol.4 *The Japan Christian Intelligencer* - ¥4,515
 - Vol.5 *Essays And Editorials I, 1886-1897* - ¥5,250
 - Vol.6 *Essays And Editorials II, 1897-1898* - ¥4,935
 - Vol.7 *Essays And Editorials III, 1898-1924* - ¥4,515
- (All published by Kyobunkwan Publishing Department)

For more information and placing orders, contact the bookstore at:

Christian Bookstore Department Kyobunkwan Co.

4-5-1, Ginza, Chuoku, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan

Phone: +81-3-3561-8448 Fax: +81-3-3563-1288

Email: xbooks@kyobunkwan.co.jp

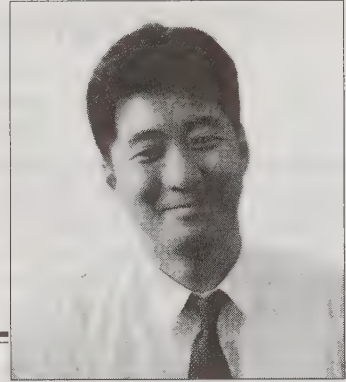
Payments for orders from overseas can be made by credit cards.

(by Hisashi Yukimoto)



Japan Art bible Society website:
www.biblesociety.org/bs-jan.htm

Meet the New International Affairs Executive Secretary at NCCJ



At 191 centimeters tall, Michinori Mano stands out in Japan but perhaps not as much in Europe where he worked until recently at the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva. He started working at NCCJ in May 2nd and “on loan” from the YMCA.

Born and raised in a Christian home in Tokyo, at the age of two months Michinori went with his family to live until he was two on the East Coast of the United States, where his father worked for the National Health Institute. He was baptized ten years ago at the age of 24, and it was then he was given the Christian name “Paulo” by the UCCJ pastor who baptized him.

As a graduate of Tokyo University, Michinori Mano first studied Chemical Engineering but switched to Philosophy and the History of Education as his major. He is also concerned with the developmental environment for children and youth. He has always been interested in other cultures but it was while living in a YMCA dormitory at college that he had a chance to travel on work camps and programs to India, Bangladesh, and Korea. It was on a Bangladesh program that he met his future wife Kumi, while she was a YMCA camp leader. The couple now have a three-year old daughter named Akiko, who was baptized in an Anglican Church in Nagoya with the Christian name “Miriam.”

His interest in ecumenism also flourished when he worked as a fraternal secretary for the National Council of YMCAs of Japan and lived in a dormitory where he met Catholics, evangelicals, and members of other denominations for the first time.

After graduation, he worked for the Tokyo YMCA for four years and for the Nagoya Student and Youth Center of the Anglican Church for a year. He lived in Nagoya at the Anglican Student Center “on loan” from the Tokyo YMCA on a three-year contract, but before this was completed he was asked to go to work for the World Alliance of YMCAs for a year in Geneva. It was an exciting opportunity and

while living in Switzerland for three years he was able to travel as part of his work to countries such as Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Mexico, Ecuador, Pakistan, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Egypt, and Hong Kong.

Mano-san is interested in issues pertaining to countries all over the world and is especially interested in questions related to the Middle East. He enjoys traveling as part of his work, which is a good thing for his work with the NCCJ International Affairs Committee! But he also enjoys taking time to go cycling, kayaking, walking, trekking, and engage in photography.

As Executive Secretary for International Affairs, his responsibilities at NCCJ will include:

- International Affairs Committee
- China Church Relations Committee
- German Church Relations Committee
- Philippines Committee

His responsibilities also include the following two ‘special committees’

- Committee on Humanitarian Aid to DPRK (North Korea)
- Chernobyl Project

In addition to these six, he is in charge of the “‘Disabled’ Persons and the Church Committee.” This Committee is currently deciding on a new, more inclusive name for itself, as it works is to raise awareness of issues pertaining to those who are labelled as “disabled” and often discriminated against in Japanese society.

Mano-san is excited to be back in Japan and working with international affairs at NCCJ. His hope is to help members of the church community in Japan to expand their awareness not only within Japan and some other areas of Asia, but to take the next step and respond to other parts of the world such as the Middle East. “My wish is to get the Japanese community more aware and more involved in world issues.” Michinori Mano can be reached at mano@jca.apc.org

Climate Justice in the Pacific

As part of the World YWCA Day on April 24, under the theme, "*Sea-level Rise Today - A Report from Kiribati in the Pacific*," Ms. Mari Sasabe at Osaka YWCA spoke out about Japan's responsibility for climate justice by sharing her experience from the island of Kiribati where she attended the "Pacific Church Consultation on Climate Change." This consultation was sponsored by the World Council of Churches and the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) from March 6 to 11. She spoke to an audience of approximately 50 people.

Using a world map and photographs of the consultation, Ms. Sasabe, a former staff member of the Osaka YWCA, shared her own encounter with the Pacific when she met some activists from the region at a World Council of YWCA in 1987 and worked later at PCC and the Pacific YWCA as a research intern for three years from 1991. She explained about Kiribati, the current impact of the sea-level rise that she witnessed there and what took place at the Kiribati Consultation, along with Japan's impacts on the Pacific, including the history of Japanese military occupation in the country during the World War II and its official development assistance (ODA).

"The greatest injustice lies in the fact that those who live a life that is harmless to the environment, those who are not involved in the causes of environmental problems and those who know how to behave in nature as humans, suffer first from us who do not do so or are not so," she said, speaking of the impact of climate change on the Pacific. She also said that the other injustice is found "between the present generation that is indulging in the present life and future generations who will suffer from it."

She pointed out the importance of the Pacific tradition on the concept of their land used in Pacific languages, which is also referred to similarly in all of those languages as a

woman's womb and naturally linked with the biblical story of creation. This suggests that their land is the source of life to them. They have felt blessed and lived humbly together in communities while helping each other, long before the present eco-theology appeared, knowing how much they can and should consume from the nature.

Recalling her visit to a Kiribati community in the Solomon Islands, she said that the attachment of those who have lived in their traditional way of life in the Pacific to their land is very strong. "If people like those in Kiribati who have lived in communities and helped each other, though the land that they have clung to is coral, calcareous and not very fertile, are to leave their land as their islands are sinking, their relationships, values and originality that they have would never remain alive," she said.

"We, as those who are causing the problem (of climate change), bear a responsibility to be aware of it and act to reduce it. And we also need to be responsible for bearing the cost of adaptation in countries that are affected by climate change," she remarked, referring to a statement called the Otin Taai Declaration which was issued at the Consultation. She also mentioned a debate at the Kiribati Consultation over whether such cost is the responsibility of countries such as Norway, an oil-producing country, or something that Pacific churches should ask industrialized countries as this promotes what they call a "begging syndrome" instead of solidarity with other countries.

"Having been involved in the issue of climate change, I would like to keep speaking out on that, although it may sound like something far away to the Christian community in Japan which is currently focused on domestic issues such as the Self-Defense Forces, Fundamental Education Law, and so forth," she concluded. (by H.Y.)

Kyoto NCC Study Center Calendar

March 3: Dr. Martin Repp (NCC Study Center) presented a talk on the "Significance of Interreligious Dialogue for our Present World" for young Buddhist priests at Mampuku-ji (Obaku-shu).

March 5: Prof. Emeritus Masami Ishii (Lutheran Theological University, Tokyo) delivered a presentation on "Funeral Liturgical Text of the Japanese Lutheran Church" for the NCC Study Center's Research Group on Funeral and Ancestor Veneration in Japan.

April 6: Dr. Martin Repp gave a presentation on the social, political and religious implications of the NCC Study

Center's Interreligious Studies in Japan Program at the YWCA in Kobe.

May 7: Prof. Jorg Dierken, a systematic theologian from Hamburg University, spoke at the NCC Study Center (Kyoto) on "Religion and Negativity between East and West," a theological discussion on the Kyoto School.

May 11: PD Dr. Angelika Doerfler-Dierken of the Institute for Social Research of the German Army (Strausberg) gave a presentation on "The Interest in Samurai by German Soldiers — On the Fascination of Fighting."

May 22: Prof. Hideo Yuki lectured on “Yasukuni Shrine and Ise Shrine under the System of Separation of State and Religion” at the Neejima Society’s Symposium on the Tenno System at Doshisha University (Kyoto).

June 2: Meeting of the Advisory and Executive Committees of the Interreligious Studies in Japan Program at the NCC Study Center (Kyoto).

June 4: Rev. Masato Yoshida (Dean of Williams Theological Seminary, Kyoto) gave a presentation on the “Funeral Services in the Anglican Church” for the NCC Study Center’s Research Group on Funeral and Ancestor Veneration in Japan.

June 12: Forum marking the publication of “Which Religious Practices Are You Pursuing? Questions Surrounding Aum Shinrikyo,” edited by the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions and the Tomisaka Christian Center. Speakers include Ms. Shoko Egawa on “Notes from My Investigation” and Prof. Masaaki Noda (Kwansei Gakuin University).

June 6-7: The NCC Study Center’s Annual Residential Seminar for Pastors took place at the Shimogamo Shrine (Kyoto). This year’s theme was “Learning from Shinto Festivals (*matsuri*).” Participants may attend the *nagoshi shinji* ceremony. In Japanese.

REPORT of the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions (Kyoto)

At the end of March 2004, Prof. Hideo Yuki retired as the Study Center’s Director. He is professor emeritus of Doshisha University (Kyoto) and served as the Study Center’s director since 1985. Prof. Yuki is a specialist on State Shinto and the problem of religion and state in Japan. His steady leadership and impartiality brought him trust and recognition from interfaith religious leaders throughout Japan and fostered NCC Study Center’s reputation as a reliable organization to cooperate with. He will continue to work as advisor for the Study Center, while Rev. Ishii (Baptist Church), Chairman of the Board of Trustees, becomes acting director until a successor is found.

After completing his contract as Associate Director in the beginning of this year, Dr. Christian Hermansen became a Lutheran missionary and associate professor at at Kwansei Gakuin University (Nishinomiya) for the School of Law and Politics. He is responsible for one of the three weekly chapel hours. The Board of Trustees asked Dr. Martin Repp to continue to work as Coordinator of the

Interreligious Studies in Japan Program, and appointed him as Associate Director and Editor of the Study Center’s *Japanese Religions*. Since Dr. Repp received a call as Professor for Theology and Comparative Religion at the Graduate School for Pure Land Studies at Ryukoku University (Kyoto), Dr. Repp took over the responsibilities at the Study Center on a voluntary basis until a suitable successor is found.

From March 16 to May 16, the Study Center welcomed Prof. Dr. Jorg Dierken (Hamburg University, Theological Faculty) and his wife PD Dr. Angelika Doerfler-Dierken (Institute for Social Research of the German Army, Strausberg) as visiting scholars. While Prof. Dierken pursued research on the Kyoto School of Philosophy, Dr. Dierken-Doerfler did her research on the history of samurai and the samurai ethics with regards to their popularity in Western countries. (See also the Calendar)

The recent issue of *Japanese Religions* is a special issue on Meiji Christianity and contains articles on the acceptance of Christianity (Suzuki Norihisa), *Kyofukai*-Japan Christian Women’s Organization, est. 1886, formally known as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (Elizabeth Dorn), Confucianism and Christianity in Uchumura Kanzo (Yoshinaga Keiichiro), Yamano Gunpei and the Salvation Army ((David Rightmire), the Omi Mission (Gregory Vanderbilt), and the Japanese Christian Overseas Missionary Movement (Hamish Ion).

For the recent and forthcoming events organized by the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, see the Calendar in this JCAN issue.

Contact:

Dr. Martin Repp, Associate Director

E-mail: studycen@mbx.kyoto-inet.or.jp

Homepage: www.japanese-religions.org



NCCJ Calendar Highlights 2004

January

- 11-12 Non Violence Training Workshop organized by NCCJ Youth Committee
- 22-24 National Consultation and Gathering of "Gaikikyo" (National Christian Coalition on Alien Registration Law Problems)
- 25 Day of Prayer for Christian Unity, co-sponsored by NCCJ and the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Japan

February

- 6 Interfaith Rally to oppose SDF (Self Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq organized by Interfaith Peace Network
- 16 Press Conference on opening of "Hot Line" to oppose compulsory performance of *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo*
- 23 Ecumenical Luncheon Meeting with Dr. Ahn Jae-Woong and Dr. Prawate Khid-arn of CCA (Christian Conference of Asia)

March

- 8 Lecture Meeting on Ecumenism for newly graduate seminary student organized by Division of Christian Education of NCCJ
- 17 Solidarity Action with 600 Wednesday Demonstration in Korea on "Military Sex Slavery System during World War II"
- 18 Submit the petition of opposing SDF (Self Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq to Japanese government organized by Interfaith Peace Network
- 19 Open-air Rally at Hibiya Park to oppose US occupation on Iraq organized by World Peace Now.
- 30-31 Emergency Peace Action in front of Diet Building and submit a letter of Protest against Emergency Legislation

April

- 15 Easter Worship and Celebration with members of Diet and government officials.
- 16 Submit the petition of opposing SDF (Self-Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq to Japanese government organized by Interfaith Peace Network
- 24-27 Peace Caravan to visit Rokksho Village in Aomori (Nuclear Power Plant)

May

- 3 Open-air Rally at Hibiya Park on Peace Constitution and Peace Walk
- 11 Interfaith Network Meeting to oppose Death Penalty
- 14 International Symposium on Conflict Resolution in Kyoto organized by Niwano Peace Foundation
- 25 Sayama Central Rally and Demonstration for Mr. Ishikawa (Buraku Discrimination)

June

- 3-8 NCCJ General Secretary attends CCA Executive Board meeting in Thailand
- 8 NCCJ took petitions collected from the internet to the Diet Building to Prime Minister's office and had a press conference regarding the Iraqi situation and demanding the withdrawal of Japanese Self Defense. Some of the speakers were: Sr. Filo Shizuke Hirota (Catholic Council for Justice and Peace), Reiko Suzuki and Rev. Toshi Yamamoto (NCCJ)

July

- 21-24 Joint (Japanese, Koreans and Koreans in Japan) Teens Peace Camp in Korea

August

- 2-4 Seminar: Human Rights Education for Christian Schools (*Kyushu*)
- 15 Prayer Meeting for Peace (*Chidorigafuchi*)

September

- 1-9 NCCJ's delegation to visit China

Obituary: Rev. Tsutomu Moriyama

Rev. Tsutomu Moriyama, the chairman of the NCCJ Committee on Yasukuni Shrine Issues, passed away at a Tokyo hospital on November 7, 2003. He was 69 years old. A memorial service was held at his church in Tokyo on February 29, 2004.

Born in Tokyo in 1934, Rev. Moriyama became a pastor of the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ) in 1960 and a member of the UCCJ Committee on Evangelism in the same year after studying at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary. He served as the chairman of the NCCJ Committee on Yasukuni Shrine Issues and the Steering Committee of the UCCJ Information Center on the Yasukuni and the Emperor System Issues. He was also a member of the Steering Committee of the Christian Network for Peace and represented various civic movements, while being the pastor of UCCJ Honjo Ryokusei Church in Tokyo for 40 years.



JCAN Editor's Interview

The editor of JCAN was interviewed by a columnist for *The Japan Times* on May 1, 2004. Anyone interested in reading the article go to www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5/fl20040501a1.htm

JCAN Has New volunteer!

Meet Ronald Julian from the Philippines who is helping now with the layout of JCAN. Ronald is from Quezon City, Philippines. He has a background in technology and architecture. He is married to UMC missionary, Deborah Umipig, and they have a year old son, Matt Deuel. Deborah works with Center for Japanese-Filipino Families (CJFF). Ronald will be a volunteer in Mission and work with migrant worker issues in Kanagawa District.

Artwork Credits

Artworks in pages 1, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 17, 22, and 24 are all from Midori Shibata's book "Gospel." Midori is at Otaru Boyodai (UCCJ) Church. Postcards of her artwork are available. Email: midoriba@msi.biglobe.ne.jp

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